(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government is contemplating to take any concrete steps in this regard; and

(d) whether Government is aware that several small manufacturers print MRP 20 to 25 times more than the cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) to (c) As per the provisions contained in the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodites) Rules, 1977, the manufacturer/importer of a pre-packed commodity is to ensure that the package contains, *inter-alia,* declaration of retail sale price in the form "Maximum Retail Price" (MRP), which shall be inclusive of all taxes. This is normally done by the company on the basis of calculation of cost and market factors. No guidelines have been prescribed by the Government for determining the MRP by the company.

(d) No such complaints have come to the Department.

Recommendations of Abhijit Sen Committee

1217. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Abhijit Sen Committee has recommended to reintroduce the universal PDS with uniform central issue price; and

(b) if so, the actions being taken by Government to implement the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This recommendation was not agreed to since the Targeted PDS was introduced in June, 1997 with a view to aim at the underprivileged sections of the society, as the earlier Universal PDS did not adequately focus on the hungry and had urban bias. The introduction of universal PDS may result in the PDS losing its focus on meeting the needs of the poor.

Diversion of Foodgrains

1218. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current stock of foodgrains available with Government;

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been large scale diversion of foodgrains meant for PDS, as indicated by a panel set up by his Ministry;

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard and the reasons for the deiversion of foodgrains;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the country spends over 10000 crores for PDS; and

(e) if so, whether Government has given a thought for overhauling PDS and, if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The stock of foodgrains (rice & wheat) as on 1.11.2007 is as under:—